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VENUS IN ARMS;

OR, THE PETTICOAT COLONEL:

A COMIC-INTERLUDE IN ONE ACT,

BY MRS. CORNWELL BARON WILSON.

PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY,
With Remarks, by D.-G.

A Description of the Costume, cast of the Characters,
Entrances and Exits, Relative Positions of the Per-
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REMARKS.

Venus in Arms; or, the Petticoat Colonel.

A PLEASANT farce, and by a lady, too! is doubly pleasant, and puts criticism in good humour. Mrs. Wilson marches, for the first time, into our dramatic regiment, a Petticoat Colonel! Mars in arms we have often seen; but Venus, until the present occasion, never.

Sir Frederick Melville and Captain Dashall accidentally meet at an inn in the town of Pontefract. The knight is stoical and taciturn, with a touch of the mysterious; the red-coat is prying into everybody's affairs, and not very reserved about his own. The Tiger Tavern is renowned for two things: the horses are slow and sure —to tumble down; the waiters have deaf ears and lazy legs. Both description of animals, four-footed and two, are of the dullest; and Dan, the head two-legged intelligence, has no more brains than he was born with. To the inquiries of Dashall, Sir Frederick returns one icy monosyllable; and the capped and feathered note of interrogation is shunned as a busy impertinent, and left to the torments of conjecture.—When in London, he had chanced to fall in love with a pretty brunette; but her maiden aunt pronounced him a rake and rattlebrain;—she durst not return his passion, but she did his letters; and so, a forlorn bachelor, Captain Dashall, of the Seventh Hussars, diverts his melancholy in country quarters, and hiccups “Arabella!” over his third bottle, with variorem anti-benedictions upon the female Argus, whose hundred pair of spectacles keep watch and ward.

Two young ladies arrive at the inn: the one to join her husband, who has been obliged to fly to Scotland on account of an unlucky duel with a brother officer; the other,

prompted by affection, and a little by curiosity, is the companion of her sweet coz. They have two hundred miles further to travel;—post-horses (except such as are like a post!) are the thing impossible at the Tiger; and lion Dan has neither ears nor gallantry to attend to the bells that ring, on that ring 'em. Provoked at this incivility, and apprehensive of future inconveniences on the road, the single lady resolves to put on inexpressibles before marriage; and, metamorphoscd into a military man, command that respectful attention which the grinning Tykes of the “north countrie” deny to a pair of petticoats in transitu. A suit of uniform, left behind by the lady's husband in his hasty flight, is one of the miscellaneous articles in their bag and baggage. This, with a pair of mustachios, left behind, too! transforms the junior fair one into Venus in Arms, and turns the Tiger into an arena of rare bustle and fun.

While this metamorphosis is going on, and the married lady is fondly anticipating a moonlight meeting with her spouse, the melancholy Militaire, chanting a ditty describing the bliss of a bachelor's life, interrupts her reverie; and, with his usual politeness, offers to be her escort to see the Lions of Pontefract. Venus in arms having completed her toilette, returns just in time to prevent the colloquy from growing too interesting and particular. She is introduced as the husband of the lady; and the chagrin of Dashall at the mal-a-propos interruption, gives way to his surprise on beholding the extraordinary family likeness between the young soldier and Arabella, who, he learns, to his additional wonder, are brother and sister!—Dashall is quickly identified by the feminine recruit as her well-beloved scapegrace. He asks to whom he has the honour of addressing himself? “Sir Frederick Melville,” is the reply; and the astonishment becomes mutual, when Sir Frederick is informed that he has just been recalled, and appointed Colonel of the Seventh Hussars! This sudden promotion produces indescribable perplexity to its

lucky object and his lady. Dashall undertakes to apprise his brother officers of their colonel's presence among them ; military honours shall be paid him ; a high-spirited charger, all blood and bone, he shall mount to-morrow ;—report has pronounced him an accomplished Gambado ; and it will require all his tact to keep himself tight in the saddle ! He breaks to him his passion for the lovely Arabella, and paints her charms in such glowing colours, that Venus is fain to blush, and turn away from his transports. Following up his kind intentions, he desires Dan to provide a substantial luncheon for twenty, at the colonel's expense—to do it handsomely ; and when Dan's November physiognomy looks unutterable wonders, a purse of twenty pounds (the entire joint stock of the lady-travellers !) he snatches familiarly from Venus in Arms, and quoits into Dan's out-stretched clutches, in part payment. The officers of the Seventh, from the captain down to the drum-major, all muster to do honour to their colonel's hospitality. The *maiden* speech is pretty well got through ; but some blundering occurs, that elongates the visage of the Irish quarter-master. The colonel puts the regiment's muster-roll into his wife's reticule, and expresses himself in anti-military style on the subject of the cat-o'-nine-tails ! The captain gives him a friendly hint how freely soldiers rattle over their wine ; and tips a sly wink to his brother red-coats to ply their little Mars with winc, and send him home to his Venus as drunk as Chloe ! The word of command is jovially obeyed : the colonel has as many pledges as a Welsh parson or a pawnbroker ! His (her !) head turns round, the brain grows giddy, and Venus quits the table some shct or two in the wind. While this revelry is going forward, Sir Frederick, the phlegmatic, and Dan have a palaver ; during which the whole affair of the luncheon transpires ; and the philosopher's imperturbability is gently ruffled when he hears that a duplicate Sir Frederick, and a duplicate Colonel of the Seventh Hussars, is feasting and frisking as merry as a grig with his

dear Emily, whom, for her honour and his own, he hopes is also in duplicate ! His double, escaped from the riotous board, is runimuting how to extricate herself from her noisy companions ; when the stoic marches sternly in, and demands of the trembling stripling if he is Colonel of the Seventh Hussars ? The answer is in the affirmative. Of course, then, his name is Melville, and his wife Lady Emily ? Right again ! Concentrating his inward rage into a couple of awful words, the stoic ejaculates, " Young man ! " — " Young man ! don't young man me ! " eries the young woman. Whereupon the stoic demands instant satisfaction ; and gives his antagonist the choice of swords or pistols. This puts Venus in a terrible fright, and shows forth the kind feeling of her lover ;—for Dashall, espying the little colonel's anxiety to get out of the scrape, and charitably imputing the white feather to love of domestic tranquillity, volunteers to stand in his shoes, to shoot and be shot at. This completely wins the heart of Venus in Arms. At this moment, Dashall pulls the ~~trigger~~ of a pistol that he was not aware was loaded : the pistol and the colonel go off together—the one, with a loud bang ; the other, in a fainting fit ! This brings affairs to a crisis, and clears up the mystery. Sir Frederick and his lady exchange mutual congratulations ; and Venus throws up her commission, and herself into the arms of Dashall.

Arabella found an appropriate representative in Mrs. Stirling ; her lady-like air and military swagger were excellently pourtrayed.



D.—G.

MEMOIR OF MRS. STIRLING.

MRS. STIRLING is the daughter of a retired staff-officer, and was born in July, 1816. Her first histrionic essay was at the Cobourg theatre ; she afterwards became a favourite at the Pavilion, under the name of Miss Fanny Clifton ; playing a variety of top parts in tragedy, comedy, and melodrama. Her next principal character was in the drama of matrimony, (doubtless, a *musical* one !) when she gave her hand to Mr. Stirling, a popular actor in the provinces, and stage-manager of the City theatre.

Mrs. Stirling's professional trip to Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham, was highly successful. She touched hearts and cash in a very satisfactory manner. She then signed and sealed with Mr. Lessee Bond ; and on the 1st of January, 1836, this lively lady made her first curtsey at the Adelphi, in *Biddy Nutts*, in "The Dream at Sea."

Her fame was now established ; and when the Adelphi opened for the following season, Mr. Yates engaged her as a trump card. She acquired vast praise by her representation of *Sally Snow*, a nigger's flame, in one of those dramatic hodge-podges of rags, lamp-black, and grease, imported by Jim Crow. It was provoking to witness such a prostitution of talent ; and more so, to hear the stupid shouts that hailed an exhibition so sordid and disgusting. The actress whose intellectual vivacity can play Rosalind, Lady Teazle, &c., should not yellow-ochre her face, trick out her person in the gaudy tatters of May-day and Bartlemy-fair, and ejaculate low balderdash, however modestly rendered but half intelligible by an outlandish jargon. We are happy to find that Mrs. Stirling is now engaged at that elegant and select little theatre, the St. James's, where her abilities will have fair play. Jim Crow has never polluted its boards, and we hope the reptile never may.

Cast of the Characters,
As performed at the Metropolitan Minor Theatres.

Strond, 1837. St. James's, 1837.

Sir Frederiek Melville (Colonel of the Seventh Hussars, late of the Tenth)	Mr. Howe.	Mr. Sidney.
Captain Dashall	Mr. J. Lee.	Mr. J. Webster.
Lieutenant-Captain Gorget	Mr. G. Cooke.	Mr. Hart.
Cornet Standard	Mr. Chicheley.	Mr. Moore.
Quarter-Master O'Phalanx	Mr. Searle.	Mr. Brookes.
Dan (Waiter at the Tiger Inn)	Mr. Attwood.	Mr. Gardner.
Arabella Beaumont (the Pettycoat Colonel)	Mrs. Stirling.	Mrs. Stirling.
Lady Melville (her Cousin)	Mrs. W. J. Hammond.	Miss Mears.

Costume.

SIR FREDERICK MELVILLE.—Black coat—white trousers—Wellington boots—travelling military cap.

CAPTAIN DASHALL.—*First dress*: Military undress—scarlet military waistcoat—blue pantaloons, with gold lace—cap. *Second dress*: Full uniform of the Seventh Hussars.

LIEUTENANT - CAPTAIN GORGET, CORNET STANDARD, and QUARTER - MASTER O'PHALANX.—Full dress uniforms of the Seventh Hussars.

DAN.—Drab jaeket—flowered waistcoat—buckskin breeches—striped stockings—shoes and buckles.

ARABELLA BEAUMONT.—*First dress*: Pink muslin—silk scarf—straw hat. *Second dress*: Undress uniform of the Tenth Hussars.

LADY MELVILLE.—Fashionable blue sarsnet travelling dress, with swansdown trimming—bonnet and veil.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this Work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The *Stage Directions* are given from personal observations, during the most recent performances.

R. means Right; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre; D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. D. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; S. E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrane; C. D. Centre Door.

** The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

VENUS IN ARMS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Travellers' Room in a Commercial Inn at Pontefract—folding doors, c. f.—a door r., marked No. 3—another l., marked No. 4—table and chairs, r. c.*

SIR FREDERICK MELVILLE *reading a letter, c., and Captain Dashall, sitting at the table, arranging a box of pistols, discovered.*

Sir F. [Reading.] “Return to London without loss of time, but with secresy. I have that to communicate which I cannot do by letter. Cheer up, my respected friend; the commander-in-chief knows your merits, and will do you justice.” *[Folding up the letter.]* So writes my agent, and I have ever found him faithful to my interest.

[He remains in thought, c.]

Das. [Calling.] Waiter! waiter! They say one gets better attendance at the Tiger than any other inn at Pontefract. Heaven knows, if that be the case, bad is the best! I’ve nearly broken my arm with ringing, and cracked my voice in bawling, and devil a waiter, cook, or chambermaid, can I get to come near me!

Sir F. [Calmly, as if recovering from his reverie.] The people don’t seem very attentive here.

Das. Oh, curse ‘em! I’ve been trying to make them hear for the last ten minutes—all to no purpose!

Sir F. Truly, sir, one must wear the armour of patience on these occasions; ‘tis the dress best suited to a traveller. For my part, I take these things very coolly. I waited half an hour before anybody answered me. *[Laughing.]* Ha, ha, ha! ten minutes is nothing!

Das. Nothing, my dear sir? Zounds! you must be of a most phlegmatic temperament! If I had been in your place, I should have pulled the house about my ears! I’ll have another try. *[Ringing violently, and calling.]* Here, Dan! John! Thomas! waiter! boots! ostler! in the devil’s name, some of you answer!

Enter DAN, L., carrying a small portmanteau, with an address on it.

Dan. Did yow eall I, zur? Do yow want anything?

Das. [Rising in a rage.] Do I want anything?

Dan. That's just what I ax'd. How should I know if you doant tell I? Lord love ye, zur, I be no guesser!

Das. Scoundrel! you have made me wait so long, that I forget what I rang for. Attend to that gentleman first, till I remember it.

Dan. [Crossing to Sir Frederick.] Be this your portmante? 'Cos it's direeted [Reading.] "For James Melton, Ssquire, of Lunnon—to be left at the Tiger Inn, Pon-tefract." That's our inn.

Das. [Aside.] Melton! Who the devil's he, I wonder? I must find it out!

Sir F. [To Dan.] It is mine. Are there no letters under the same direetion waiting?

Dan. No, zur; there be none whatsumdever.

Sir F. In that ease, I must proceed. Take the portmanteau, plaee it in the carriage, and order fresh horses—put to, instantly. I must depart.

Dan. Depart! and not been in the house a quarter of an hour! [Aside.] Lord, what a eustomer! [Aloud.] Be you in haste, zur?

Sir F. [Coldly.] Do as I desire you.

Dan. Why, zur, I can assure yow our house be reakoned one o' th' best on the road; we've every 'commodation both for man and beast; but jist at this nick o' time, we're unluckilly quite out o' horses.

Das. Yes, that's true enough; for the only two pair of skeletons they have, were lcnt half an hour ago to drag on the stage that was overloaded with presents of moor-game and black-eoeks to the good eitizens of London.

Sir F. (R.) 'Tis very provoking! Can't you get me horses from some other inn?

Dan. (c.) We'll do the best we can for thee, zur; in an hour thou shalt be 'eommodated, depend on't. [Aside.] He'll want a meal before that time, surely! Won't do to let folks off without eating or drinking.

Sir F. An hour! Well, make what speed you can; but let me have a private room.

Dan. Oh, Ees, zur, Ees! No. 4, if yow please. [Opening the door—aside.] Dang it, he must order zomeat now!

[Exit, L.]

Das. [Aside.] I must know who this gentleman is, and his business here. [Approaching him.] Beg pardon, Mr. Melton, thus as a stranger intruding upon you; but I must congratulate you on the patience you spoke of just now, for you'll need it all, if you're in a hurry. My dear sir, you'll get no horses here these four hours—I know it! Egad! if they let you off in six even, you may think yourself in prime luck!

Sir F. [Coolly.] Indeed!

Das. Since I've been quartered in this town, which is now about two months, I've taken up my abode in this infernal hotel—as they style it, “Hotel and Posting-House,” though they've neither servants to wait on the one, or horses to supply the other.

Sir F. [Coldly.] I wonder you stay in a place so ill accommodated.

Das. [Drawing near him.] Why, to tell you the truth, I put up with these disagreeables more easily than I otherwise should do, because—it is the only house in the town where they give credit to military men—you take?

Sir F. I have heard that a detachment of the seventh hussars is quartered here. I presume you belong to that superb regiment.

Das. Sir, you judge rightly; and, by your manners and appearance, I guess you, too, have been a soldier. [Strutting about conceitedly.] Why, certainly, there is a “je ne sais quoi” about a military man, that cannot be concealed. As I am known in the town, and visit all the best families, I may be of service to you. If so, pray command the good offices of your humble servant, Captain Frank Dashall, who will be most happy in making your further acquaintance.

[Bows.]

Sir F. [Haughtily.] Captain Dashall, I thank you for your offer, but I do not usually make such sudden friendship with strangers.

Das. Oh, my dear sir! you do very right to be cautious; there are many impudent fellows in the world, who will thrust themselves into your society, without anybody knowing who they are, where they come from, or what they aim at. Now I'm not one of that sort; for, after five minutes' conversation, everybody knows who I am, and what my intentions are. [A pause—aside.] I must pump him deeper yet, or I shall never discover who he is! [Aloud.] My dear sir, if you should have any business with our regiment—for instance, if you wish to get the agency, you could

not have fallen into better hands than mine ; I know everybody—can ask anything—in short, only confide in me, and your business is done.

Sir F. [Half smiling.] Sir, you really are very polite !

Das. [Bowing conceitedly.] Oh, sir, that's a qualification for which our regiment is celebrated. But your business—*[Aside.]* He's so close; I shall never get it out of him ! Ha ! I guess it now ! *[Aloud.]* 'Tis a love affair on which you are engaged. Who is she ? I can assure you, the girls are devilish handsome here. Come, I see I'm right ; only let me into the secret, and we'll have the lady on the high road to Gretna in a quarter of an hour, though I should be obliged to order out a detachment of my own soldiers to draw her there.

Sir F. [Gravely.] Sir, I assure you, a love affair is the very last thing that would enter my thoughts at present.

Das. Indeed ! sorry for it ! Now, my case is entirely different : a love affair is the first thing in my thoughts at present. I'll just relate my little history, and you shall judge. When I was last in London, I fell in love with a little brunette, with whom I was only in company three times. After the usual compliment of sighs and glances, I made my proposals. The dear creature confessed I was not indifferent to her, or, rather, that she was not indifferent to me. But a prudent old aunt (now I hate old aunts !) biassed her mind against me ; made her believe I was a rake —a rattlebrain ; and before I could offer anything in my defence, our regiment was ordered off here, and all my hopes were blighted ! I wrote and wrote, but, alas ! my letters were returned unopened, and the whole affair was at an end. So here I am, a forlorn bachelor, obliged to console myself for the loss of the only woman I ever could love, by pretending the passion for every other, whom chance throws in my way.

Sir F. Truly, captain, yours is a pitiable situation ; but I must really beg you will keep your own counsel. In the mean time, allow me to thank you for your kind offers, and to wish you a very good morning !

[Bows, and exits l. d., No. 4.]

Das. [After a pause.] Umph ! he has not my openness of disposition ; close as sealed orders ! Now, I'm only happy when I can get some one to talk to about my Arabella. Dear Arabella ! still do I love her ! and if I can only get leave of absence for a few days, I will hasten to London, and, in spite of all the old aunts who may oppose me, once

more throw myself at her feet, and urge my suit ! Our new colonel is daily expected ; I'll wait his arrival, and try what I can do. (By the way, they say he's a good-natured fellow, but the very devil for fighting !) If he won't grant me leave, why, I'll even take it ! I know the worst—a month's arrest, which I'd willingly endure for five minutes' conversation with my charming Bell. [Walking about impatiently.] Love has not taken away my appetite. [Singing.] " Not even Love can live on flowers." I begin to want my luncheon. [Calling.] Waiter ! waiter !

Re-enter DAN, L.

Scoundrel ! where's my luncheon ? I ordered it an hour since.

Dan. Did ye ? It's the first I've heard on't, captain.

Dan. Why, I ordered it yesterday—to day—every day—for the next month ! Let me have it directly, or else take care of those precious ears of yours ! [Exit, L.

Dan. Tak' care o' my ears ! I'ze warrant if yow get them between your fingers, they'd tingle all the rest o' th' day ! There's nout pleasing these here officer chaps ; I never seed sich fellows ; and the best o' th' joke is, they order everything, and pay for nout. Ecod ! if I were master, I'd say, as they do at playhouse, " No orders admitted." By gum ! here's another chaise a drawing up. [Bell rings without.] Coming ! coming ! Whare th' dickens shall we put 'em all ? Ecod ! I must run and get that chap's luncheon though, and keep my ears out of his grippers ! [Exit, running, R.

Enter LADY MELVILLE and ARABELLA, L.

Lady M. [Entering.] Well, sir, No. 3 must do ; but pray make haste and prepare it for us. My dear Arabella, we've had sad trouble to get any room at all ; they seem very unaccommodating people here.

Ara. (R. C.) True, cousin ; I told you, two poor women, travelling by themselves, would be sure to meet with plenty of difficulties.

Lady M. (L. C.) Yes, I feared so ; but you would accompany me, in spite of all the obstacles I raised against your doing so.

Ara. Could I be so selfish as to allow the dear companion of my childhood, and my bosom friend, to venture on on such a journey alone ? Besides, I've some little fancy to see this husband of whom you talk so much ; so set down

some of my services to the score of woman's failing,—curiosity, as well as affection. And, pray, how soon shall we arrive at our destination?

Lady M. We are just half way. You are aware that my husband, on account of an unfortunate affair of honour, was obliged to fly from the capital a few weeks after our marriage. Having an estate in Scotland, thither he retreated, till the affair had blown over. Prudence, and fear of discovery, prevented my going with him; but now, wearied with waiting for happier times, I am determined to join his lonely exile; and you, my pretty coz, would share my solitary journey! We have but two hundred miles more to go, when I hope to present you to a cousin whom, as yet, you have never seen.

Ara. [Sighing.] Ah! two hundred miles more! And are we really going so far from dear, dear London?

Lady M. Oh! you begin to sigh for the gaieties of the metropolis already, and the poor dear male creatures who follow in your train? But, after all, I begin to think Dashall, the handsome rattlepate captain, holds the place nearest your heart. Eh! child, is it not so?

Ara. Why, I must confess I rather liked the man; but my aunt said such things of him, oh! she quite frightened me! [Sighing.] So I rejected his addresses, returned his letters unread, and resolved to forget him. [Sighing.]—Heigho! Well, if ever I do marry, I hope I shall meet with a nice, steady, sedate, sensible man; if there is such a thing to be found.

Lady M. Ah, coz, coz! look as demure as you please, but I'll lay my life, that rattlebrain captain will be the man to make all right at last. But where are the people of the house? They seem to leave us a long time in this public room.

Ara. Let us ring, and see if our room is ready. [Going to the table, R., and ringing several times.] No one comes.

Lady M. 'Tis astonishing how they hurry themselves!

Ara. [Ringing again.] And the worst of it is, one must pay for non-attendance. All this comes of females travelling without a protector! Then we're so imposed upon! Why, that last stage, though I promised to pay the post boys double if they'd put their horses into quicker pace, they only laughed in my face, and quietly resumed the comfortable doze they were taking on the backs of their crawling animals! Would I had been a man for their sakes! I'd soon have seen if they could not move a little faster!

Lady M. Oh ! you speak so gentle and so civil to them, they'll never mind you ! Pr'ythee, coz, turn over a fresh leaf ; speak sharply, and we shall get on better.

Ara. Faith, coz, I was almost induced to disguise myself on our first setting out, and wear the unmentionables before marriage, for the sake of being your protector.

Lady M. Oh, that would have been delightful ! And there is still plenty of time to put this idea into execution ; for we are come but half way yet, and may have many more disagreeables to contend with. I have brought with me one of my husband's uniforms, which, in his hasty flight, he left behind ; I'm sure it will fit you ! Come, coz, nothing like a military coat for geting through the world : post-boys, waiters, and chamber-maids, like turkeys, will all follow a bit of scarlet cloth !

Ara. Well, I declare I've a good mind to try what sort of a man I should make ! Let's see : how much money have we got ? For I shall be more expensive in my habits when I change my dress. [Taking a purse out of her reticule.] Only twenty pounds, I declare, to defray a journeyn of two hundred miles !

Lady M. Well, we must be frugal, and make it do.—But I hope you won't be detected ; you have not much the air of a military man !

Ara. I can't say I have at present ; but never fear—I'll soon acquire it ! A well-cut coat, fashioned after the last lecture of Professor Shearwell, a good crop of mustachoes, and a little blustering—if these won't make a fashionable fellow, may I die an old maid, and lead apes—I shan't mention where. Come, I'll unpack our trunks, and prepare for our scheme. Adieu to woman's gear, and hey for the sword and the epaulet ! [Exit, R. D., No. 3.

Lady M. Dear Arabella ! how much she merits my affection ! But I'm sorry to see her little heart so full of that good-for-nothing Dashall !

Re-enter DAN, R.

Well, sir ! is there any chance of having horses to-day ?

Dan. [Aside.] Ah ! they're all arter the zame thing : horses, horses ! be the cry fra everybody, (as the mon wi' big hump zaid in 't play t'other night i' the barn, " My kingdom vor a horse !") but none on 'em thinks o' ordering owt to eat or drink ; that is, none as can pay vor't !—[Aloud, bowing.] Ma'am, yow may depend on horses as zoon as they do come in.

Lady M. I expect a young cavalry officer here, to accompany me in my journey, having just parted from my female companion. Do you know if he has arrived? [Aside.]—I'd better give some hint, or Arabella's disappearance will seem strange.

Dan. [Aside.] Another officer! Marcy on us! we shall be quite eer-run wi' 'em! [Aloud.] No, ma'am, I arn't zeen ony vresh gentleman here vor the last hour.

Lady M. Go, then, and inquire if he has arrived.

Dan. Ees, ma'am. [Aside.] Marcy on us! [Exit, R.]

Lady M. Oh! how I long to meet my dear husband—my lover, I should rather say; for I have not been married long enough to forget those sweet days of romance, when I stole from the festivities of my guardian's roof, to listen to his song by moonlight in the glen.

SONG.—LADY MELVILLE.

Oh! meet me in the glen, love,
 When the festal halls are bright;
 And, like the gentle moon-beam,
 Come stealing to my sight.
 When, to hail the wine cup's blushes,
 The joyous guests are met,
 And thy guardians, 'mid the revel,
 Their watchful cares forget;
 Then meet me in the glen, love,
 When the festal halls are bright;
 And with steps of fairy fleetness,
 Come stealing to my sight!
 Oh! meet me in the glen, love,
 At that soft and shadowy hour,
 When Night her tear is weeping
 O'er blossom, bud, and flower;
 And the orb that walks in beauty
 Along the silent sky,
 Alone shall see our meeting,
 Unmark'd by mortal eye.
 Then meet me in the glen, love,
 When the festal halls are bright;
 And with steps of fairy fleetness,
 Come stealing to my sight!

Re-enter CAPTAIN DASHALL, C. D. F.

Das. [Singing.] "A Bachelor leads an easy life!"—[Aside.] The devil!—A petticoat here! and I not know

it! [To *Lady Melville*, bowing.] Your servant, madam! Are you waiting for any one?

Lady M. Yes, sir; I've been asking—

Das. My dear madam, depend on it, they'll not bring it you! May I offer my services?

Lady M. You are very kind, sir. A friend and myself are waiting for post-horses, to proceed on our journey.

Das. Waiting for horses! [Aside.] That's fortunate—at least, for me! [Aloud.] I'm sorry, madam, to inform you, there are none to be procured at present. A traveller and a young military gentleman have both been anxiously inquiring for them; and they are obliged to wait patiently till they can be got from the other inn. Meanwhile, madam, I assure you this town of Pontefract is well worth looking over; the streets, to be sure, are rather narrow and winding, and the pavement none of the best for a female to walk upon alone. Allow me to offer you my arm as a conductor.

Lady M. Sir, you are very polite; but—

Das. Don't mention it, madam; 'tis but proper for a military man, who has been two months quartered here, to do the honours of the place, and show the Lions!

Lady M. [Confused.] I suppose, then, I must not be angry; though, for a stranger, you are certainly somewhat familiar.

Das. [Bowing.] My dear madam, I know exactly what you would say; but 'tis a failing I have, for I never yet could come to a resolution of looking upon any lovely woman as a stranger!

Lady M. Oh! sir, you flatter!

Das. You come, I presume, from London: that great mart of fashion and beauty could alone furnish the graces I behold. I adore everything that breathes of the metropolis!

Lady M. Have a care what you say; I may take that for a declaration—

Das. [Approaching nearer.] I only speak of your charms as I find them. [A noise heard without—aside.] The devil! [Looking off, l.] That young fellow coming!—[Aloud.] Madam, do allow me to find some better place than this public room. [Offering his arm.] Here you are liable to be intruded upon every moment, as there are several regiments quartered in the town, and this inn is their common lounge. [Aside.] I'll keep her to myself if I can!

Lady M. Oh! really, sir, you are very polite! [Aside.] How I wish Arabella would come, that I may get red of him.

Das. Do allow me, madam ; you'll find it quieter here !
 [Exeunt at the folding doors, c. f.]

Enter DAN, L.

Dan. Well, I'se zet that chap his luncheon, vor I should nae loike to ha' my ears tweaked. Lord ! lord ! how our house be o'errun with these milenary varmint ! It's just vor ali th' world loike a rabbit warren,—as fast as one pops out, 'nother pops in ! [Laughing.] He, he, he ! zuch zwag-gering, bullying jockies, I ne'er seed afore ; and yet they do zeem very happy, loike. Well, I declare, I doan't know, but I think, zomehow, I should loike to be a soldier, if 'twarn't vor the fighting part.

Arabella. [Without, L. D.] Don't tell me anything of the kind ; I must have horses directly. Very well—very well ! if the lady's in this room, I can introduce myself.

Dan. By gums ! here be little cock-sparrow colonel coming, as yon lady was axing vor ! [Laughing.] He, he ! and now she's gone off vor a walk wi' t'other chap. Well, I'm blessed if ever I seed sich queer doings afore ! [Exit, R.]

Enter ARABELLA, splendidly dressed in the uniform of the Tenth Hussars, L. D., No. 3.

SONG.—ARABELLA.

Oh ! I'm the man for the ladies !

Then, maidens—then, maidens, beware !

Now love, war, and beauty my trade is ;

Of your hearts have a care, have a care !

With epaulets sparkling,

And sash, smartly tied ;

Gold spurs on my heel,

And a sword by my side ;

So dashing, so gay, and seducing my air,

You'll all of you sigh for the Young Militaire !

Oh ! I'm the man for the ladies !

Their fancies—their fancies I'll please ;

Since love, war, and beauty my trade is,

The dear creatures I'll certainly tease !

With the beard on my lip,

So bewitchingly curl'd,

They'll swear I'm the handsomest

Man in the world !

Widows, wives, maidens gay, short or tall, dark or fair,

They all will pull caps for the Young Militaire !

Enter LADY MELVILLE and CAPTAIN DASHALL, C. D. F.

Ara. [Perceiving them.] Hey! it appears I have come very a-propos! Why, my dear Emily—

Das. [Aside.] His dear Emily! Mum! she's bespoke, then!

Lady M. Oh, my love! I did not see you! [To Dashall.] Allow me, sir, to present my husband to you! [Laughing.] Ha, ha, ha! you need not mind the little gallant things you were saying. Pray don't let his presence be any bar to your politeness.

Das. [Aside.] The devil take the husband! [Advancing to salute Arabella.] Can it be possible? [Confused.] Do my eyes deceive me?

Ara. [Apart to Lady M.] Heavens! 'tis Dashall!

Das. [To Arabella.] Pardon my rudeness, sir; but, faith, you startled me! I was once acquainted with a charming creature, whom you resemble as much as one diamond does another. [Sighing.] Dear Arabella!

Lady M. [To Arabella.] My dear, it may be our Arabella.

Das. Do you know her, then?

Lady M. Arabella is the name of my husband's sister; and, from the likeness you speak of, it must be the same.

Ara. [Hesitating.] Yes; probably—it is my sister!

Das. [Mournfully.] Indeed! [A pause.] When you came in, I was offering my poor services to show this lady the lions of the place. May I claim the honour of asking, to whom I am addressing myself?

Ara. [Bowing.] To Sir Frederick Melville.

Das. Sir Frederick Melville! What, he who lately had an affair of honour in town, and fled to Scotland?

Ara. The same, sir.

Das. And who has just been recalled, and appointed colonel to our regiment here?

Lady M. What's that you say? My husband recalled, and appointed colonel to your regiment?

Das. [To Lady Melville.] Did you not know it? [Shaking hands with Arabella.] My dear colonel! allow me to be the first to congratulate you on this good fortune!—We did not expect you to join us for some days, as the appointment is so recent. Ah! I see you were ignorant of the exchange, and have not yet altered your uniform.—Well, I'll run and apprise the officers of your arrival! I am certain they will not be slow in paying you military honours.

Ara. Sir!—I'm so taken by surprise, that really—

Das. [Not attending to her.] You'll be delighted with your regiment, colonel; 'tis one of the finest in the service. We are all remarkably fine fellows; well disciplined men in garrison and on duty—you understand me?—[*Apart to Arabella.*] but devils of dogs for wine and women! We've a review every week, which all the fashionables for ten miles round attend;—then, as for our band, oh! the ladies declare it's quite ravishing.

Ara. To whom have I the honour of addressing myself?

Das. Oh, to Captain Frank Dashall. I trust, colonel, henceforth we shall be better known to each other. By the way, if your horses are not here, I'll lend you one of my charges for to-morrow's muster. Such a beauty! blood, colonel, all blood! I've heard you're a capital horseman, so I need not warn you, as he's spirited, to sit tight in the saddle.

Ara. [Smiling.] Oh, captain, your caution is quite needless! But excuse me a moment; I would speak with my wife.

Das. [Retiring up.] Oh, certainly; don't let me intrude.

Ara. [To Lady Melville, with emotion.] Oh, Emily, what a situation! [Pointing to her trousers.] This comes of presuming to wear these things before one's time!—What shall I do? Colonel over such a set! I'm ready to drop with apprehension!

Lady M. Courage, courage, my dear Arabella! For Heaven's sake, don't be faint-hearted now! Your uniform and assumed character is our only protection from insult. Oh, lud! you'd be worse off as a petticoat! One could expect no quarter!

Ara. I'm not of your opinion: I'd rather trust, under present circumstances, to the weakness of my sex, than to this outward man. No *true* British officer ever yet insulted an unprotected woman! I'll take to my petticoats again.

Lady M. No, no! I implore you! Retain your disguise only half an hour longer, and I'll go and see if horses can be had at any rate. Cost what it will, we must on now; for I long to be the first to tell my dear husband of his recall and honours. Keep up your character, and I'll soon return.

[*Exit, L. D.*]

Ara. So, now she's left me to fight the battle myself! Oh! if I once get out of this dress in a whole skin, nothing shall tempt me to enlist in such a service again!

Das. [Aside, coming forward, c.] Can he really be the brother of my charming Arabella? They told me her name was Beaumont; yet it must be so, the likeness is most striking. Well, I must endeavour to get into his good graces; that will be one step towards preferment with the lady. [Aloud.] Colonel, I must compliment you on having such a handsome wife—charming creature! You seem to be passionately fond of her.

Ara. [Carelessly smacking her boot with her whip.] Oh! she's well enough; but I have seen full as pretty women—to my taste!

[Looks aside into a glass which is hanging against the wall.]

Das. Ah, I understand you! Variety—eh, colonel?—variety is charming! Well, for my part, I think all women deserve our admiration.

Ara. Ah, captain; I fancy you're a general lover, and surrender your heart without distinction to every pair of sparkling eyes you meet.

Das. On my honour, no! Come, come, you think I've been making love to your wife, but you are mistaken, I assure you; though, were I to tell you whom I do love, the avowal might prejudice you against me.

Ara. Be assured, captain, my opinion of you is already formed, and nothing you can say will change it.

Das. Then I risk nothing; nor ought I to conceal anything from my superior officer. [Warmly.] It is your charming sister whom I adore—the lovely Arabella!

Ara. [Forgetting herself.] Oh, fie! [Blushing, and turning away.] I must not listen to you!

Das. [Dejectedly.] Ah! I feared the disclosure would displease you.

Ara. [Recovering herself.] Oh, no, no! I'm not displeased, captain; I cannot help your loving my sister;—[Slyly.] but, tell me, do you think your passion is returned?

Das. Alas! I once hoped so; but some d—d good-natured friend stepped between us like an envious cloud, threw all my better qualities into the shade, and brought my failings and foibles into the strong light of day.—[Warmly.] On you alone, colonel, do I rest my future hopes. I entreat you to use your good offices with your sister in my behalf. Let me but once gain an opportunity of distinguishing myself in my profession, and she shall find I am not wholly unworthy of her approbation.

Ara. [Aside.] The man has some good qualities; I

was wrong to condemn him unheard! [Aloud.] Well, captain, Arabella shall think of what you say.

Das. [Delighted, and pressing her in his arms.] My dear colonel, you transport me! Oh! that you were Arabella herself—

Ara. [Struggling to disengage herself.] Bless me! and if I were, you could not squeeze her more!

Das. Believe me, you'll find me a true friend and brother in arms. I must tell you that you are rather dreaded in the regiment; for report says you are severe. Now let me advise you, as a politic measure, to give a little treat to the officers on your arrival. [Slapping her on the shoulder.] Nothing like first impressions, you know!

Ara. Why, I must confess, captain, that "first impressions" [Rubbing her shoulder.] have sometimes considerable weight!

Das. [Not waiting to hear her.] Ah! I knew you would approve my proposal. [Calling.] Here, waiter! waiter!—[Putting his hand before her mouth.] Now, don't say a word! no apology, my dear colonel—leave all to me! I'll superintend this little affair with all the pleasure in life!

Enter DAN, R.

Dan. Here I be! did yow call, zur? [Aside, staring at Arabella.] Bless me! another officer!

Das. Luncheon at noon for twenty. D'ye hear? get all the dainties that the season will allow; let no expense be spared. [To Arabella, who stands surprised and confused.] Colonel, I've no doubt, like myself, whenever you do a thing, you do it handsomely! [To Dan.] Twenty heads, d'ye hear? you'll provide for! And, mind, the best room in the house!

Dan. [Giggling.] He! he! twenty heads! Be I to provide brains vor them, too?

Das. Scoundrel! begone, and execute my orders!

Ara. [Taking out her purse.] At the rate you are going on, captain, I don't think I shall have—

Das. [Snatching the purse, and throwing it to Dan.]—Never mind! Here, take this on account; and if not enough, the colonel's word will be sufficient for the balance.

Dan. Well, I be on the right side, ony how. All shall be ready in time, zir. [Exit, c. d.]

Das. All I do is for your interest. Now I'll go in your name, and invite the officers to this dejeune; they'll be so pleased, in ten minutes they'll all be here. Never fear,

colonel ; you'll soon become popular, if you follow my advice, and find all right at last ! [Exit, I..

Ara. Pray heaven I may ! Well, really, I hardly know what I'm about ; I seem quite bewitched by that fellow.— He's a rattlebrain, to be sure, but his heart seems good.— This uniform, at least, will afford me an advantage which few women possess—that of getting an insight into my lover's true character before marriage ; for, certainly, he wears no disguise at present ; yet, after all, these soldiers are sad fellows, and we silly girls, dazzled by their finery, too often forget the anxieties that await us, when we become a soldier's bride.

SONG.—ARABELLA.

With waving plume and martial vest,
 Bright orders shining on his breast,
 Each maiden views the soldier's pride,
 And sighs to be his bride !
 But when the hour of peace flits by,
 And war awakes its battle-cry,
 These martial splendours but deride
 The soldier's hapless bride ;
 As sinks her heart with fond alarms,
 While the brazen trumpet sounds, “ To arms !”
 But when the strife of war is o'er,
 And home he comes, to part no more,
 How swells that heart with joy and pride !
 Oh ! happy soldier's bride !
 Then all is pleasure, mirth, and glee,
 As the rolling drum beats merrily ;
 While lauding crowds his praises sing,
 And pealing bells so gaily ring.
 Oh ! in that hour of joy and pride,
 Who would not be a soldier's bride ?

Enter LADY MELVILLE, R. D.

Lady M. Ah ! here you are, and alone. No time is to be lost, for horses are arrived, but were bespoken by a traveller who has been waiting the last hour for them. However, I promised the post-boy an extra crown to let us have them ; and he is now putting them to. Come, pay, and let us depart.

Ara. Pay !—I've no money !

Lady M. No money ! Where's the twenty pounds ?

Ara. Gone !—I've just given all I had towards paying

for a luncheon for the officers of my—that is to say, your regiment !

Lady M. [Vexed.] What ! did you offer to treat them, when you knew that was all we had to take us to our journey's end ? How could you be so ineconsiderate ?

Ara. My dear eoz, don't blame me. Dashall ordered the luncheon before I could speak, and paid for it with our purse. Well, there's nothing left for us, but to diselose our situation to the landlord, borrow some cash, and depart.

Lady M. Oh, impossible ! Do you think he would believe our story ? Why, we should be taken up for rogues and vagabonds, and put in the stocks, or the parish cage. No : the best way will be, as he's a gentleman, to confide in Captain Dashall.

Ara. [Warmly.] Not for worlds ! After what has passed between us, I'd sit in the stocks a week first !—Why, he told me of his love for my sister—aye, and I promised to serve him there, too ; for he swore the name of Arabella could never be erased from his heart.

Lady M. Why, my dear, do you forget you are at present a military offieer, and not a love-sick damsel ? You should be made of sterner stuff !

Ara. Pity my situation ! [A noise heard without, L.

Lady M. (r. c.) What noise is that ?

Ara. (c.) Oh ! our guests arriving, to be sure ! [Looking through a window.] They're all coming, from the captain down to the drum-major, I suppose. You must assist me in doing the honours—nay, there's no escaping now ; and as wife of their colonel, yours will not be a fictitious character.

Lady M. Look at my dress !

Ara. Nonsense ! it will do very well. You need only arrange your hair a little. [Arranging *Lady Melville's* hair, and putting her dress in order.] I shall never do justiee to the character I personate, I fear, or credit to those who have presented me with it. But here they eome ; there—there, you'll do very well now !

Lady M. Whatever will you say to them ?

Ara. Oh ! just what ehance puts into my mouth : a eertain gentleman never fails a woman at a pinch, they say.

Enter CAPTAIN DASHALL, LIEUTENANT-CAPTAIN GORGET, CORNET STANDARD, and QUARTER-MASTER O'PHALANX, in the full dress uniforms of the Seventh Hussars, L.

Lieu. Health and happiness to our new commander !

Cornet. Noble sir, accept our protestations of fidelity and attachment !

Ara. [Aside.] Now, impudence, stand by me ! [Aloud.] Hem !—Gentlemen ! comrades ! brothers in arms ! welcome ! Believe me, I feel proud to have the command of so many gallant soldiers ; and, trust me, I will endeavour to retain the confidence and good opinion—you are pleased to entertain of me. [Ready to laugh.] Gentlemen, my feelings overpower me, and you must excuse my saying more !—[Turning away, laughing.] Come, that for a maiden speech, was pretty well !

Das. (L. c.) The rest of our comrades remain in the next room ; where they wait your presence ; but as these gentlemen had some business to transact which requires dispatch, I brought them hither.

Ara. Oh ! I really cannot enter upon military duties to day ; let me first introduce myself to my company in the way you propose, and to-morrow will be time enough for business.

Das. Oh, certainly ; as you please, colonel !

[*O'Phalanx* advances, and salutes *Arabella*, who is about to do the same, but is stopped by *Lady Melville*.]

Lady M. [Apart to her.] I know more of military etiquette than yourself ; I'll put you right !

Ara. [To *Dashall*.] Who is this gentleman ?

Das. [Surprised.] The quarter-master, colonel.

Ara. Oh, true—very well ! [*O'Phalanx* gives her a paper.] What's this ?

Qua. An plaise your honour, kernel, 'tis the muster-roll of the regiment.

Ara. Very well ; we'll examine it together some other time. [To *Lady Melville*.] Here, my dear, take care of it ; put it in your reticule.

Qua. [Aside.] Put it in her redicule ! Faith, and I think we're like to get a white sargent, as well as a new kernel ! [Aloud.] Praise your honour, two of the privates have been fighting together.

Ara. [Forgetting herself.] Indeed ! I hope they're not hurt, poor fellows ! [*Lady Melville* jogs her elbow.]

Qua. I've ordered them under arrest, plaise you honour.

Ara. [Assuming military consequence.] You've done quite right ; I'll not allow fighting in my regiment ! [The Officers look surprised.] That is, civil broils, gentlemen—civil broils !

Qua. I suppose, plaise your honour, you'll order them to be flogged ? How many lashes ?

Ara. [Shuddering.] Flogged !—Oh, no, not this time ; I'll forgive them ! But bid them beware in future—bid them beware in future !

Lady M. [Apart to her.] If you show so much lenity, they'll find out you're no officer.

Ara. [Apart to *Lady Melville*.] Be quiet ! If the duty of an officer consists in inflicting unnecessary severity on those he commands, I'll throw up my commission !

Enter DAN, c. d.

Dan. Gentlemen, everything be on table.

Ara. That's well ! [To *Dashall*.] You'll allow *Lady Melville* to be one of the party ?

Das. Oh, certainly ! I hope she'll do the honours of the table.

Ara. You're very kind ; but, to say the truth, I don't like to leave her alone here.

Das. Ah ! jealous, colonel ? Well, a soldier should always keep his eyes right towards his wife. [Apart to her.] I hope nothing will be said to offend the lady ; but you know, colonel, officers' messes, like citizens' dinners, are not the most eelebrated for the morality of their eonversations. You must keep them in order.

Ara. [Aside.] Good heavens ! what a situation !

Das. You'll excuse my mentioning it, colonel ; but I never like women I respect to know what d—d fools men make themselves over their wine. *Lady Melville* can retire before any toasts are proposed ; they're jolly fellows, and must have a few rounds to the health of their new colonel.

Ara. Very well ! [Aside.] Oh, that I was oncee out of this scrape !

Das. [Apart to the Officers.] Mind and make the colonel drunk !

Officers. [Apart to him.] Never fear ! we'll ply him well !

Ara. Gentlemen, I attend you. Come, quarter-master !

Das. [Whispering her.] Colonel, 'tis not usual for the quarter-master to mess with the officers.

Ara. [Confused.] Oh, true ! I had forgotten it ; but on a day like this, we must wave ceremony. I wish to see all around me happy !

Das. Oh, as you please ! [Aside.] What a queer fellow our little colonel is ! [To *Lady Melville*.] Allow me, madam !

[He offers his hand to lead out *Lady Melville*—
Arabella, forgetting herself, holds out her hand for
 him to conduct her, but recollecting herself, she
 assumes a military air, and struts before them.

Ara. Come, gentlemen, I attend you!

[*Exeunt all but Dan, c. d. f.*

Dan. How them chaps will fill themselves out, surely !
 That colonel o' theiern zeems a main rum'un ! And as vor
 a soldier, he doant look no more loike un nor I do ! Well,
 I declare I doan't know, but, somehow, I'ze a great mind
 to be a soldier ; I should look as well as thi' best o' 'em,
 and hold up my head as high. I'ze a 'cute lad, as all we
 Yorkshire be, and could zoon larn t' exercise ; and then,
 when I be a real soldier, how the girls ul run arter un !—
 Dang me ! but I'll ha' a try at it !

SONG.—DAN.

Oh, I should loike to be
 In the grand cavaldre,
 Mounted high on a prancing charger ;—
 Oh, I'm zertain I should do,
 And my t' exercise get through,
 As well as a man that is larger !

The girls ul all be running,
 When they hear our troop a coming,
 For we shall attract each beholder ;
 While prudes, behind their fan,
 Will look sly at little Dan,
 And zigh, “ What a duck vor a soldier ! ”

Enter SIR FREDERICK MELVILLE, reading a letter, l. d.

Dan. [Aside.] Oh, here be the gentleman that ha' been
 waiting vor horses. I'm zure he's not one o' the milen-
 tary ; he's too patient and civil loike to belong to ony
 corpse !

Sir F. [Reading.] “ There's no harm done after all.”
 Thank heaven ! he has recovered from his wounds, and I
 am free to return !

Dan. Zorry, zur, ye are obliged to wait so long ; but
 th' horses as com'd in just now, another gentleman got by
 mistake.

Sir F. [Cooolly.] Never mind ; mistakes will happen.

Dan. [Aside.] Nothing seems to ruffle him. [Aloud.]
 Ye ha' gotten the letter, zur, what com'd directed to
 James Melton, Esquire ? It war'nt come when virst yow

axed vor't. I'ze zorry 'bout t' horses, zur ; but thou shalt be zure o' th' next pair, as yow zeem in a hurry.

Sir F. At present I intend remaining here ; this letter has altered my plan. [Aside.] I never expected such good news !—Recalled with honour, and appointed Colonel of the Seventh Hussars !—'Tis beyond my hopes. [To *Dan.*] Good fellow, get me something to eat, for I feel now in a situation to do justice to it.

Dan. I'ze afraid, zur, there arn't much left i' th' way of eating.

Sir F. [Aside.] I begin to think that facetious young soldier was right. [Aloud.] What ! is there nothing to be had ?

Dan. Why, to zay truth, zur, the officers of the Zeventh Hussars are having a kind o' lunch here, as they calls it—though it be more loike a dinner—and, devil fetch me ! if there's an egg or a fowl left i' th' whole pleace ! They be celebrating th' 'pointment o' their new colonel.

Sir F. Indeed ! that's very kind of them ! Who pays for this treat ?

Dan. Oh, the colonel, to be zure, pays the piper. Lord love ye, zur ! 'twould ha' done your eyes good to ha' seen the lay out !—Sich fish and flesh, and sich pies !—You've heard o' our Yorkshire pies ? [Laughing.] He ! he ! he ! Th' varry thought on um makes one's mouth water.

Sir F. When is the colonel expected here ?

Dan. Expected ! — Lord love your ignorance ! he be arrived ; and a pratty little fellow he be, as ever yow looked upon ! [Sir Frederick starts.] Aye, and his little wife, Emily, as he calls her, she's wi' 'em, too ; all feasting away as merry as grigs ! He always calls her his “dear Emily,” or “my love,” or zummut tender loike, as I used to talk to my Zukey.

Sir F. [Aside.] Zounds and the devil ! what do I hear ? My wife with some other officer ! [To *Dan.*] Hark ye, my friend : how did this lady come, and when ? [Aside.] 'Tis high time to inquire !

Dan. [Aside.] Wauns ! he can be in a passion, though, I zee ! [Aloud.] Why, she com'd in a post-chaise fra Lunnon this morning ; and Colonel Melville—that be his name—com'd a little while arter, and joined her here.—She told me hersel' she expected him, and axed if he ware arrived. I suppose he dropt out o' th' sky, vor I didn't zee ony conveyance bring lie.

Sir F. [Walking about, agitated.] Very strange ! — I

must inquire into this mystery. 'Tis plain some one is usurping my title ; but can Emily be in the plot ?

Dan. If I can get onything by way o' refreshment, zur, I'll bring it ye. I'll see what the officers ha' left.

Sir F. D—n the officers, and the refreshment, too !—I'm not hungry now ; leave me !

Dan. [Aside.] Well, to be sure ! what maggot is in his brain now ? [Looking off.] Ah ! here comes the colonel himsel' : zooks ! he seems well primed ; so I'll be off—there'll be a blow up !

[Exit, l.

[Sir Frederick retires up, r.

Enter ARABELLA through the folding-doors, c. r.—the Officers are seen within sitting round a table, with wine, &c.—the doors are closed after Arabella—Sir Frederick observes her attentively.

Ara. [Pressing her hand on her forehead, as if giddy.] I could stand it no longer ; my brain grew giddy, my ears sang, and the whole room seemed to turn round ! Another moment, and I must have fainted. [Leaning on the back of a chair.] It was all Dashall's fault : he pledged me continually—first to the health of my sister, next to the health of my wife. I could not get off drinking them.—To crown all, he proposed Victoria, our hope and pride ! God bless her ! I would not have flinched from that toast, no, though I had died in swallowing it ! [A pause.] Oh, dear ! how ever shall I get out of this scrape ? If I could only devise some pretext for putting these officers under arrest for a few hours, we might depart unmolested, and laugh at them all.

[Sir Frederick comes forward.

Sir F. (r. c.) [Bowing sternly.] Are you the colonel of the Seventh Hussars, quartered here ?

Ara. (l. c.) [Recovering herself, and bowing gracefully.] I have the honour to be their representative.

Sir F. You are, then, Colonel Melville ?

Ara. 'Tis so said, sir.

Sir F. And you are here with Lady Melville, who, before her marriage, was called Lady Emily Templeton ?

Ara. Exactly so, sir. Pray, do you know the lady ?

Sir F. [Coldly.] Intimately !

Ara. I rejoice to hear it !—Then I may regard you as a friend ?

Sir F. [Sternly.] Young man—

Ara. [Sharply.] Young man !—Don't young man me, sir !

Sir F. The character you have thought proper to personate obliges me to treat you as a gentleman and a soldier; but for the insult you have offered to my honour, I must have instant satisfaction. I give you your choice—pistols or swords!

Ara. [Confused.] Pistols!—Really, sir, I—I don't understand—

Sir F. [Coolly.] Oh! then swords, if you please; the weapon is quite indifferent to me.

Ara. On my word, sir, I do not comprehend what you mean, or how I have offended you. I never saw you before in my life: how, then, can I have insulted you?

Sir F. [Firmly.] Sir, this affectation of ignorance is contemptible! In ten minutes I shall be at your service; and as I have no acquaintance in this town, you may bring a second or not, as you please; and if you wish to provide a surgeon, you can do so; one of us may need him.

[Exit, l. d.]

Ara. Where, in Heaven's name, will all this end?—There seems to be a fatality in this uniform, to bring its wearer into scrapes! Fight a duel! Well, what next? Egad! I shall begin to fancy I've exchanged my sex with my clothes! Oh, dear! after all, a military coat is not such a charming thing as I thought!

Enter CAPTAIN DASHALL, with a table-napkin over his arm, and a wine-glass in his hand, c. d. r.

Das. Colonel, what the devil ails you?—Why did you leave us so abruptly? Come, come; you have been fidgetty ever since your wife left the room. Nonsense, man! she's safe enough up stairs. Come, return to us for a short time;—hang it! don't tie yourself to a woman's apron-string!

Ara. [Pettishly.] Don't talk to me about apron-strings; I've something else to think of! Do you know, some fellow whom I met here just now, and never saw before in my life, has been picking a quarrel with me!

Das. [Rubbing his hands with glee.] Bravo! bravo! Delightful! I thought this was to be a busy day! Well, and what did he say to you?

Ara. I hardly know; something about Emily, pistols, and a surgeon. [Almost ready to cry.] I'm so confused!

Das. Why, colonel! colonel! Ah, I see! the thought of your wife unmans you! Well, her being here is embarrassing. [Musing.] I have it—I have it! yes, it will do!

Ara. What are you talking about?

Das. My dear colonel, I see you are not quite yourself ; and to fight a duel under one's wife's nose is not very agreeable ; so put me in your place. [*Arabella waves her hand.*] My dear fellow, but you shall ! Should the worst happen, there will be none left to mourn after me ; I am only a good-for-nothing bachelor, whose loss in society will soon be filled up ; you are a husband and a brother. [*With emotion.*] Could I fall in a better cause than in defending a life so valuable as yours ?

Ara. [*Aside, struggling with her tears.*] Dashall, I'm thine for ever ! — That speech has done more execution here, [*Pointing to her heart.*] than the keenest arrow ever shot from Cupid's bow ! [*To the Captain.*] No, generous friend ! your life shall not be risked for mine. I entreat —nay, I command you not to disobey me !

Das. [*Bowing.*] Colonel, to your commands duty, but, in this instance, not inclination, obliges me to yield. [*A pause.*] At least, let me be your friend. What's the hour, and the weapons ?

Ara. In ten minutes I expect him ; he named swords, I think, but left it to my choicer.

Das. Pistols—pistols, by all means, colonel ! If you're not very expert at the sword, they are far better. I have an excellent brace of Joe Manton's here. [*Taking them out of the case on the table, and presenting one with the muzzle towards her.*] Look at them ; you never handled prettier weapons.

Ara. [*Starting back.*] For Heaven's sake, mind they don't go off ! Keep at a distance ; I can see them here very well !

Das. [*Aside.*] Surely he's not a coward ?—But, for a military man, he is really the most nervous I ever saw !— [*Aloud.*] Don't be alarmed, colonel ; look here. [*He draws the trigger, and it goes off.*] Confound it ! I forgot they were loaded !

Ara. [*Screaming, and falling fainting on a chair.*] Ah !

Das. [*In amazement.*] Zounds ! my dear fellow, you need not go off, though the pistol did ! [*Running to her.*] Why, it has not touched you, man ! [*Shaking her.*] The devil ! he's quite insensible, however ! [*Calling.*] Hollo ! help ! help !

[*He seizes a hand-bell on the table, rings it violently, and fires off the other pistol in the air.*

Enter LADY MELVILLE and DAN, in alarm, L., and the OFFICERS, C. D. F.

Omnes. What's the matter?

Lady M. [Running to support Arabella.] Ah! what do I see?

Das. [Aside.] Cursed unlucky, to be sure! [Aloud.] Oh! by accident, one of my pistols went off, and the Colonel of the Seventh Hussars has swooned at the smell of gunpowder!

Qua. Swooned at the smell of gunpowder! — Here's a pretty article for the field of battle!

Lady M. Oh! where's my Eau-de-Cologne? [To Dan.] Run up stairs, and bring that small box you'll find standing on the table.

Dan. Yes, ma'am. [Aside, giggling.] He, he, he! — By gum! these little bantum cocks be always chicken-hearted, wi' all their swaggering! [Exit, r.]

Das. [About to open the breast of Arabella's coat.] — Give him air—this stock is too tight!

Qua. Give him whisky!

Lady M. [Pushing Captain Dashall away.] Pray, gentlemen, leave him to me!

Enter DAN, with a band-box and a smelling-bottle, r.

Dan. Be this the box?

Lady M. Yes, yes! [She snatches the box from Dan, tears off the lid, and throws the contents—lace, tippets, flowers, gloves, &c., on the floor. and applies the smelling-bottle to Arabella.] His senses return—he is recovering! Well, my love, how are you?

Enter SIR FREDERICK MELVILLE, with a drawn sword over each shoulder, L. D. — he stops short on seeing the crowd around Arabella.

Ara. [Leaning on Lady Melville.] Ah! dear Emily! you here! I've had a dreadful swoon! There—I'm better now! It was all Captain Dashall's fault; I never could bear the report of fire-arms!

Qua. [Aside.] There's a pretty fellow, now, to be a soldier! By my soul, and there's many like him in the world, who love the finery and the glitter, but devil a bit of the fighting part of our profession!

[Arabella looks round, and, seeing the box overturned, starts up suddenly, and runs to pick the things off the floor.]

Ara. Oh, good gracious ! my blond lace, tippets, and all my best ornaments, on this dirty floor ! Why, Emily, how could you be so careless ? [Holding up a flower.] Here's a wreath for Almack's !

Sir F. [Coming forward, l.] Oh ho ! the lace, tippets, and ornaments, of a colonel ! Why, what prank is this ? [Laughing.] Ha ! ha ! ha !

Ara. [Leaning on *Lady Melville*.] Ha ! I've discovered myself !

Sir F. Never mind ; you're not the first woman whose character has been betrayed by her love of finery !

Lady M. [Running to *Sir Frederick*.] Ha ! my husband—my dear Frederick ! [They all stand amazed.]

Sir F. [Embracing her.] My dear Emily ! what happy chance has brought you hither ?

Das. Your husband ! [Pointing to *Arabella*.] Then who the devil's this ? Have you two husbands, madam ?

Lady M. Oh dear, no, sir ; I'm quite satisfied with one ! [To *Arabella*.] My dear Arabella, you need not fear ; this is Colonel Melville.

Sir F. Arabella ! — Oh, I see it all now ! What, this is your charming cousin, of whom you have told me so much ?

Lady M. The same, dear Frederick ! — Arabella Beaumont, who, to protect me through a long journey, assumed your name and attire ; know and esteem her. [Sir Frederick Melville embraces *Arabella*.] Come, I will explain everything to your satisfaction.

[*Lady Melville, Sir Frederick, and Arabella, retire up.*]

Dan. [Aside.] By gum ! the little colonel be only a woman, arter all ! [Aloud, holding up a long tavern bill.] If you please, Captain Dashall, who'll pay the rest o' th' bill ? There be two pounds, five shillings, and eightpence owing now.

Qua. Faith ! now jist hold your infernal tongue ! — You've got quite enough out of us in all raison ; so be aisy, honey, and walk off wid yourself !

Dan. Let me tell ye, measter quarter-measter, people do foind it no joke to lose a bill in these hard times.

Sir F. [To *Lady Melville*, coming forward.] I understand everything. [To *Dan*.] For the debts of these ladies, I will be responsible ! [To the Officers.] Gentlemen, I am the true Colonel Melville, your real commander ; and as you have honoured my little representative with your company to luncheon, you must not refuse to accept my invi-

tation to dinner, when the whole mystery shall be explained over a bottle of champagne. [They all bow.]

Das. [To *Lady Melville.*] Ah, madam! must I be the only unhappy man to day? In pity, intercede with that lady in my behalf!

Lady M. Oh, fie, captain! after all the pretty things you said to me, can you expect I should plead your cause with another?

Das. Then, I must be my own advocate! [Approaching *Arabella.*] Dare I hope for pardon?

Ara. Captain, I wonder you're not ~~ashamed~~ ashamed to look me in the face, after all you've said. [Laughing, and imitating him.] "Variety!" eh, captain! "variety is charming!" Remember the toasts and the sentiments you drank! Oh, fie, fie! but as your delicacy will not allow you to show "ladies you respect, what fools men make themselves over their wine," why, I'll leave you to your own conscience for further reproaches.

Sir F. Nay, nay, you're too severe!

Qua. [Aside.] By my sowl now, and I think the shame ought to be on the other side; for when women usurp men's prerogative, and put on the breeches, zounds! they deserve all they meet wid.

Ara. [To *Sir F.*] Well, I must resign my rank in your favour. But before I throw up my commission, I will exercise the noblest attribute of a soldier—mercy! [To *Captain Dashall*, with emotion.] There's my hand; I give it not to the gay and thoughtless officer who surrenders his heart to every pretty woman he meets, but to the brave and generous soldier, who would have periled his own life to save that of "a husband and a brother."

Soldiers. Huzza! huzza!

Qua. [Snapping his finger, delighted.] Faith! an she's one of the right sort, after all!

Ara. [To the audience.] And now, could I but hope my movements would pass muster here, I should stand at ease; [To *Boxes.*] and, though no longer an officer of hussars, I trust I shall still continue to command a splendid company, and fight my battles o'er again, as "VENUS IN ARMS."

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

DAN. OFFICERS. Ara. Das. LADY M. SIR F. QUA.
R.] [L.

THE END.

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